
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 519 Session of
2015

INTRODUCED BY STURLA, CONKLIN, SCHREIBER, THOMAS, SCHWEYER,
BOBACK, SCHLOSSBERG, FREEMAN, GABLER, RAVENSTAHL, TOEPEL,
FRANKEL, D. COSTA, LONGIETTI, MURT, MATZIE, BROWNLEE,
MULLERY, READSHAW, DEASY, JAMES, DeLISSIO, GOODMAN, COHEN,
GIBBONS, BENNINGHOFF, GILLEN, McCARTER AND SAMUELSON,
FEBRUARY 23, 2015

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY,
FEBRUARY 23, 2015

AN ACT

1 Establishing the Adopt-a-River Program; providing for powers and
2 duties of the Department of Conservation and Natural
3 Resources; and making an appropriation.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Short title.

7 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Adopt-a-River
8 Act.

9 Section 2. Declaration of policy.

10 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

11 (1) Widespread flooding and damage caused by severe
12 winter storms greatly damage the riverbeds and streambeds of
13 this Commonwealth. Flooding of urban and industrial areas
14 often results in the pollution of rivers and the accumulation
15 of extraordinary amounts of trash and debris in the
16 streambeds, on the stream banks and in floodplain areas.

1 (2) There is a heightened public awareness of
2 conservation and the need to protect the rivers of this
3 Commonwealth from pollution, damage, trash and debris and to
4 provide the resources necessary to restore Pennsylvania's
5 rivers and streams.

6 (3) The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission personnel
7 and financial resources available for operation of its
8 existing Adopt-a-Stream Program are limited. The Pennsylvania
9 Fish and Boat Commission program is designed to expand fish
10 habitat, angling, boating and aesthetic values of
11 Commonwealth waters and would complement the Adopt-a-River
12 Act to be administered by the Department of Conservation and
13 Natural Resources.

14 Section 3. Definitions.

15 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
16 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
17 context clearly indicates otherwise:

18 "Department." The Department of Conservation and Natural
19 Resources of the Commonwealth.

20 "Program." The Adopt-a-River Program established under this
21 act.

22 Section 4. Establishment of Adopt-a-River Program.

23 The department shall administer a program designed to remove
24 litter from and to beautify the rivers of this Commonwealth. The
25 program shall be known as the Adopt-a-River Program. The program
26 shall include public informational activities but shall be
27 directed primarily toward encouraging and facilitating
28 involvement of volunteer groups in litter cleanup work,
29 assigning each group to a specific river or stream segment.
30 Volunteer groups may include individuals, civic groups and

1 businesses.

2 Section 5. Agreements.

3 An agreement entered into between the department and a
4 volunteer group under section 4 shall include, but not be
5 limited to, the following criteria:

6 (1) The volunteer group may request a specific segment
7 of the river or stream it wishes to adopt, but the assignment
8 shall be at the discretion of the department. In assigning
9 sections of a river, the department shall coordinate and
10 cooperate with affected Federal, State and local management
11 agencies and private landowners. The department may require
12 the volunteer groups to notify or obtain written permission
13 to perform cleanup activities from landowners immediately
14 abutting the waterways.

15 (2) The group shall remove litter along the designated
16 river or stream segment at least twice each year or as funds
17 permit and in a manner that is safe and appropriate for
18 members of the volunteer group.

19 (3) The group shall agree to abide by all rules related
20 to the program that are adopted by the department.

21 (4) The volunteer group shall contract to care for the
22 designated river or stream segment for at least two years.

23 Section 6. Department responsibilities.

24 (a) Distribution.--The department shall ensure a wide and
25 diverse distribution of the funds, materials and information to
26 a variety of projects throughout this Commonwealth.

27 (b) Assistance.--The department shall provide trash bags,
28 safety information and assistance to the participating volunteer
29 groups.

30 (c) Large and heavy items.--The department shall be

1 responsible for facilitating contracts for the removal of large
2 or heavy items from a river or stream segment as deemed
3 necessary and feasible by the department. The department may
4 also use funds for tipping fees and disposal costs involved with
5 the removal of trash and debris.

6 (d) Private contributions.--The department shall encourage
7 private contributions to the program to aid in implementing the
8 program to the fullest possible extent.

9 Section 7. Volunteer recognition.

10 The department shall create a recognition program to
11 acknowledge the efforts of volunteer groups, agencies and
12 businesses that participate in the program, which may include
13 appropriate signage in areas of high visibility that does not
14 detract from the natural beauty of the stream.

15 Section 8. Reporting requirement.

16 The department shall report annually to the General Assembly
17 on the implementation and progress of the program established by
18 this act.

19 Section 9. Regulations.

20 The department may adopt the regulations necessary for
21 implementation of the program.

22 Section 10. Appropriation.

23 The sum of \$1,000,000, or as much thereof as may be
24 necessary, is appropriated to the Department of Conservation and
25 Natural Resources for the fiscal year July 1, 2015, to June 30,
26 2016, to carry out the provisions of this act.

27 Section 11. Effective date.

28 This act shall take effect in 120 days.